

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

The paragraph beginning at page 20, line 20 is amended as follows:

Two preferred embodiments are distinguished by locus of control. In the first preferred embodiment, the application server 332 uses the EPG database 360 in conjunction with the timing offsets database 370 to determine which interactive applications should be broadcast on a particular channel in a particular location at a particular time, retrieves the interactive applications corresponding to the particular channel, location, and time or program identification code from the interactive content database 380, and prepares the interactive applications for broadcast, as described above. In the second preferred embodiment, it is the CPE 350 instead of the application server 332, that performs these functions; i.e. it is the CPE 350 that performs the EPG 360 lookup and subsequent timing offsets database 370 lookup, as well as the retrieval of the interactive application from the interactive content database 380. In another embodiment, the EPG 360 lookup and the subsequent timing offsets database 370 lookups are performed by the application server 332, which feeds the timing offset objects to the data insertion unit 336 to broadcast to the CPE 350 which retrieves the interactive applications from the interactive content database 380 [[392]] and acts upon them. Thus it can be seen that the present invention does not limit the location at which determinations regarding the interactive content are made, or actions regarding the interactive content are taken, or the specific hardware or software apparatus that makes these determinations, or takes these actions.

The paragraph beginning at page 14, line 23 to the paragraph ending at page 16, line 3 is amended as follows:

Referring now to Figures 7 and 8 and Table 1 (below), in one embodiment, lists of timing offset objects 700/800 may be of the following types: broadcast program only (“event”), advertising only (“advertising”), or both (“full”). For event timing offset objects, each timing offset 710 refers to an interactive element that will happen during the broadcast program at a

time relative to the a_start 850 of the broadcast program as that program would play without any breaks, such as breaks for commercials.

In the example here, E1 is an event timing offset 801 that takes place 1 minute into the broadcast program. E1 has a timing offset value of 1 minute. Because there are no breaks in the broadcast program before 1 minute, the viewer will experience the interactive content corresponding to timing offset E1 1 minute after the program starts. E4 is an event timing offset that takes place 12 minutes into the broadcast program. E4 has a timing offset value of 12 minutes. Because there is a 30 second commercial break 822 at 10 minutes into the broadcast program, the viewer will experience the interactive content corresponding to timing offset E4 12 minutes 30 seconds after the start of the program. If the broadcast program were to start at 20:00:00 (8:00 pm), the viewer would experience E4 at 20:12:30. Thus event timing offset objects exist without regards to timing for advertising breaks. In Figure 8 other exemplary event timing offsets 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 810, 811, and 812 are shown at 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 10 minutes, 10 minutes 30 seconds, 12 minutes 30 seconds, 20 minutes, 20 minutes 30 seconds, 21 minutes, 21 minutes 30 seconds, and 22 minutes 30 seconds respectively.

For advertising timing offset objects, each timing offset 710 refers to an interactive element that will happen during a break in the broadcast program at a time relative to the start of the broadcast program. In the example at Table 1 and Fig. 8, A2b is an advertising timing offset that takes place 20 minutes into the broadcast program. A2b signifies the beginning 807 of the second commercial break 824. A2b has a timing offset value of 20 minutes. A viewer would experience the interactive content corresponding to timing offset A2b at 20 minutes after the start of the program. A2e signifies the end 808 of the second commercial break and has a value of 20 minutes 30 seconds. If the broadcast program were to start at 20:00:00 (8:00 pm), the viewer would experience the end, triggered by timing offset A2e, of the interactive content corresponding to the commercial 824 at 20:20:30. Advertising timing offsets exist without regards to the specific interactive events that happen during the broadcast program, they refer only to breaks in the broadcast program. An example of another commercial break is shown at 826.

For full timing offset objects, the list of timing offset objects includes the timing offsets for both the broadcast program and the advertisements. In the example at Table 2 and Fig. 8, F4, F5, and F6 are full timing offsets 804, 805, and 806 respectively that take place 10 minutes, 10 minutes 30 seconds, and 12 minutes 30 seconds respectively into the broadcast program, and represent the start of the first commercial (F4), the end of the first commercial (F5), and the fourth element of interactive content in the broadcast program (F6) respectively. The viewer would experience the respective beginnings and endings of interactive content corresponding to F4, F5, and F6 at 10 minutes, 10 minutes 30 seconds, and 12 minutes 30 seconds respectively into the broadcast program. In one embodiment, advertising and event timing offsets arrive separately and are merged together to produce the equivalent of full timing offsets. In another embodiment all of the timing offsets are full timing offsets. In yet another embodiment, timing offsets can be mixed and of any type.